

Oral History Projects

The Embassy of the United States in Lithuania is pleased to announce a small grants competition for oral history projects, to be judged by Dr. Brent Glass, Director Emeritus of the Smithsonian Museum of American History and a world-known expert in oral history. The goal of the competition is to provide a motivation for Lithuania's young people to undertake the study of history in their home communities; to promote museum outreach to young audiences; and to capture historical record that amends and expands on existing collections.

Announcement posted: August 28, 2012

Closing date for applications: please submit a letter outlining your project by September 17, 2012. Please send your letter via email to Cultural Affairs Specialist Jūratė Butkutė at ButkuteJ@state.gov.

Funding type: small grant award

Decision date: September 25, 2012

Expected number of awards: 2

Expected number of secondary awards: 2

Proposals that are judged excellent, but cannot be funded due to financial limitations of the current allocation, will be retained for consideration in the Embassy FY2013 grants program.

Expected size of monetary award: \$250

Preferred applicants: youth groups, youth organizations, local museums or archives working in partnership with secondary schools or youth groups. Individuals and non-profit organizations are also eligible to apply. Preference will be given to proposals from cities and towns other than Vilnius and Kaunas.

Description

This funding opportunity will support oral history research projects conducted by youth (12-21) under the guidance or in collaboration with a local museum or archive. For the purposes of this announcement, the term "museum" is applied widely and includes botanical gardens, archives with publically accessible exhibits, and libraries with historical exhibits. Applications should propose:

Collecting new, previously unavailable historical material

Cataloguing existing oral history materials (e.g. audio archives) and creating a public presentation thereof

Project-based, hands-on teaching of oral history methods that results in a production of a new collection

Background

Oral history has become an international movement in historical research. Oral historians in different countries have approached the collection, analysis, and dissemination of oral history in different modes. An oral history project involves the collection and study of historical information about individuals, families, important events, or everyday life using audiotapes, videotapes, or transcriptions of planned interviews. These interviews are conducted with people who participated in or observed past events and whose memories and perceptions of these are to be preserved as an aural record for future generations. Oral history strives to obtain information from different perspectives, and most of these cannot be found in written sources. Oral historians generally prefer to ask open-ended questions and avoid leading questions that encourage people to say what they think the interviewer wants them to say. Some interviews are “life reviews”, conducted with people at the end of their careers. Other interviews focus on a specific period or a specific event in people's lives, such as in the case of war veterans or survivors of a hurricane.

Priorities

Priority will be given to projects that focus on the following topics:

Minority history and experience, including Jewish history and the history of Roma

Women's history or women's perspective

Current issues: violence against women, trafficking in persons, human rights

Number of applications

Applicants may submit more than one application, provided that each application is for a distinct project

Review criteria

Overall Impact

Reviewers will judge the projects on the basis of the likelihood for the project to exert a sustained, powerful influence on the community where it is undertaken. Does the project address an important gap of understanding or need? If the aim of the project is achieved, how will knowledge or practice be improved?

Participants

Are young people actively involved in the work and learning from what they do? Does the proposal address how young people will be recruited/attracted to the project, or how the results will be distributed to youth audiences?

Innovation

Does the application challenge and seek to shift current understanding of an issue or a common view?

Approach

Are the overall strategy, methodology, and analyses well-reasoned and appropriate to accomplish the specific goal of the project? Are potential problems, alternative strategies, and benchmarks for success presented?